



# APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE DEMOCRATS

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## Investing in Efforts That Help Discourage Abortions

Regardless of how each of us feels about the advisability or efficacy of a constitutional amendment on abortion, we should all be able to agree on actions that can be taken to help reduce the economic pressures and other real life conditions that can sometimes cause a woman to decide not to carry a pregnancy to term.

The attached fact sheet summarizes how the Democratic amendment offered during committee consideration of the Labor-HHS-Education appropriations bill would have bolstered efforts to help reduce the tragically high number of abortions in America.

**Maternal and Infant Health Care.** Every year nearly one million American women deliver babies without receiving adequate medical attention and babies born to mothers who received no prenatal care are three times more likely to be born at low birth weight, and five times more likely to die, than those whose mothers received prenatal care. The Maternal and Child Health Block Grant and the Healthy Start program help provide health care and other services for pregnant women and young children lacking other access to care, yet the Block Grant has lost 24 percent of its purchasing power since 2002 and Healthy Start has received essentially no increase since 2002. That creates more pressure not to have children.

✦ *Under the Democratic plan, the Maternal and Child Health Block Grant would receive a 16 percent increase to reverse part of its loss of purchasing power and Healthy Start would receive an additional \$25 million.*

**Child Care.** Only 10 percent of children who are eligible for Federally funded child care actually receive assistance at a time when parents working at low wages desperately need help obtaining safe and affordable child care. Yet the Child Care Block Grant is slated to be frozen or cut for the fifth straight year in 2007, which would leave the Block Grant \$38 million smaller than it was five years earlier in actual dollar terms. Based on average costs per child, the number of children served will have fallen by about 20 percent over this period. That makes it harder to raise children.

✦ *Under the Democratic plan, the Child Care and Development Block Grant would be increased by \$185 million this year to serve 27,500 more children and their families.*

**Community Services Block Grant (CSBG).** In over 96 percent of counties, Community Services Block Grants provide housing, childcare and emergency food assistance to poor Americans with nowhere else to turn. This year, the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) is slated to be cut by almost one third, from \$630 million to \$449 million. Examples of services provided include child care, job training and job placement, emergency help with food and rent, programs for youth and senior citizens, home weatherization, parenting education, and adult literacy classes. That makes it more difficult to raise children.

✦ *Under the Democratic plan, CSBG would receive \$181 million to eliminate the House bill's cut.*

**Domestic Violence Prevention.** Four million women experience a serious violent assault by their partner in an average year and for 30 percent of those women that abuse begins during pregnancy. Yet, Federally funded domestic violence prevention efforts have been essentially flat funded at roughly \$125 million going back as far as 2002.

✦ *Under the Democratic plan, an additional \$25 million would have been provided to expand domestic violence prevention services.*

**Abstinence Education and Family Planning.** Access to contraceptive information and services and community based abstinence programs are important elements of preventing pregnancy, yet funding for both is frozen for the coming year.

✦ *The Democratic plan would provide a 4.8 percent increase for both the Title X family planning program and community based abstinence education programs for those who wish to follow that approach.*

**New Resources for Pregnant Women and New Families.** The Democratic plan also included \$36 million in new resources for other modest initiatives such as funding for information and outreach to help expectant mothers and new families understand and gain access to resources that are available to help them care for their children. It also provides for counseling for families who have received the results of prenatal testing that indicate possible serious disabilities, in order to help understand those results and the implications and alternatives.

In total, the Democratic amendment would have invested \$575 million in these efforts and offered the support some women need in order to make a choice other than abortion.